

Chief petty officer transition

The Navy's Goatlocker recently inducted the latest group of fine Sailors into the ranks of the chief petty officer mess. I wanted to pause for a moment to reflect on the guiding principles of the chief petty officer. These principles may focus on chiefs but they hold true to the tone that should be set by every leader in our Navy, regardless of paygrade, duty assignment, or command mission. The degree of personal dedication required to excel in today's Navy is truly humbling. Gone are the days when average men and women could promote through the ranks and achieve retirement through just getting by. Our JAG Corps is filled with professional experts who set the highest standards of excellence ever realized in our fine Navy. Yet some days we focus so much on mission accomplishment that we lose sight of the basic leadership principles that make us the best law firm in the world. By employing these basic principles in our everyday operations, we will enjoy a stronger JAG Corps and a better Navy.

There are seven guiding principles for the chief petty officer. Here is a list and short description of each one.

Deckplate Leadership: Chiefs are visible leaders who set the tone. We know the mission,

know our Sailors, and develop them beyond their expectations as a team and as individuals.

Institutional and Technical Expertise: Chiefs are the experts in their field. We will use experience and technical knowledge to produce a well-trained enlisted and officer team.

Professionalism: Chiefs will actively teach, uphold, and enforce standards. We will measure ourselves by the success of our Sailors. We will remain invested in the Navy through self-motivated military and academic education and training, and will provide proactive solutions that are well founded, thoroughly considered, and linked to mission accomplishment.

Character: Chiefs abide by an uncompromising code of integrity, take full responsibility for their actions, and keep their word. This will set a positive tone for the command, unify the Mess, and create *esprit de corps*.

Loyalty: Chiefs remember that loyalty must be demonstrated to seniors, peers and subordinates alike, and that it must never be blind. Few things are more important than people who have the moral courage to question the appropriate direction in

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which an organization is headed and then the strength to support whatever final decisions are made.

Active Communication: Chiefs encourage open and frank dialogue, listen to Sailors, and energize the communication flow up and down the chain of command. This will increase unit efficiency, mission readiness, and mutual respect.

Sense of Heritage: Our heritage defines our past and guides our future. Chiefs will use heritage to connect Sailors to their past, teach values and enhance their pride in serving to our country.

For our new chief legalman, the days of observing set “working hours” are long gone. Some chiefs must do command work all day long, then start their “chief work” at 1700 as their Sailors are going home for the night. Your dedication to the care and development of your Sailors cannot be understated. You must focus every day on meeting this expectation the Navy has of you.

From here on out, your success in the Navy will be realized through the success of your Sailors and your team. You will no longer be measured by your personal accomplishments, but through your ability to lead your team into battle success, whatever the specific mission may entail. Please do not settle into a comfort zone - get out of your comfort zone! The JAG Corps is too small a community to accept professional “comfort,” and you will be called out to lead by the dedicated chiefs that surround you in our Mess.

You must do everything possible to make your Sailors and junior officers the best they can be. You owe it to them. Just like that old chief who saw something special

in you all those years ago, now you’re the “old salt” who must exercise patience and compassion while mentoring and growing our young legalmen and judge advocates.

You must always do the things that chiefs must do. It’s not enough to do things without being told – now you have to think up those things to do. You alone must realize, analyze, prioritize, improvise, exercise and supervise everything your Sailors will accomplish. You cannot be concerned with popularity. If you are, you will not succeed as “The Chief.” Someone has to make the difficult decisions. By virtue of being difficult, those decisions are rarely popular with your Sailors.

I challenge every officer, legalman and civilian employee to strive to make a positive difference every single day. Take the hard jobs, get out of your comfort zone, stay involved, and communicate up and down the chain of command. Please accept my sincere thanks and gratitude for all you do! Good luck, chiefs - it’s time to Anchor Up!



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